

## Spain\*

### A. Questions, Methods, Organisation

It can not be claimed that studies on urban history have become a coherent and systematic discipline in Spain. Nor can it be claimed that a unitary institutional organisation for such studies exists. On the contrary, it may be stated that investigation in this field has developed in a diversified and heterogeneous way, from various disciplinary spheres (general history, geography, economics, sociology, demography, architecture, engineering, law, etc.) that have long shown an interest in urban phenomena and their development. Thus, the fundamental point to be made when talking about urban history in Spain is the extremely fragmentary and sparse nature of the subject.

On the whole it can be said, that professional historians, engaged in the description or the interpretation of very general processes or in the treatment of highly specific details, have not paid special attention to the subject of the city, although there are exceptions. But these exceptions are fewer if we narrow the sphere and pass from urban history to modern urban history, that is, to urban history after industrialisation. We find then that most of the investigation devoted to this subject has been carried out by scholars who did not initially come from the sphere of history, but who, from their respective disciplines, felt the need to study the processes of the historical development of urban phenomena in their most varied aspects. The result is fragmentation, dispersion and heterogeneity, with a multitude of viewpoints and approaches, which hinders a

\* Numbers in brackets in this chapter refer to entries in the bibliography on pp. 496-510 of this volume.

synthesised presentation.

On the other hand, in view of the fragmentary and incomplete character of these views, we have to use as a referential framework some general historical studies which do not constitute urban history in themselves, but which rather provide us with a basis indispensable for an understanding of the history of the city. These are studies of the political, economic and social history of Spain, thanks to which it is possible to appreciate the role played by the city in the general history of the country and the way political, economic and social processes have affected the history of the city.\*

Specific aspects of the spatial evolution of the urban phenomenon (system and urban hierarchy, country-city relationship) have been researched above all by geographers and economists, whereas in researching urban spatial organisation proper, including the morphological aspects — types of cities, urban form, spatial growth, housing, and urban architecture — geographers have worked with architects and art historians.

Geographers and economists, together with demographers and sociologists, have also been interested in the aspects of population and social structure, land uses and prices, economic activities and functions. Furthermore, geographers, sociologists and general historians have dealt with the more obviously political aspects (parties, organisations, elections) and with the political-administrative aspects, both financial and legal, in collaboration with jurists. Urban

\* The most important of these studies are listed below since they could not be included under the headings provided in the general bibliography on urban history in Spain.

*Banco de Bilbao*, *La España des las Autonomías*, Madrid, 1981 (=Self-administration in Spain).

*Banco de España*, *Ensayos sobre la economía española a mediados del siglo XIX*, Madrid, 1970 (=Articles on Spain's economy in the mid-19th century).

*Clavera, J. et al.*, *Capitalismo español (1939–1959)*, Madrid, 1973 (=Spanish capitalism).

*Sánchez Albornoz, N.*, *España hace un siglo: una economía dual*, Barcelona, 1968 (=Spain one hundred years ago: a dual economy).

*Tortella, G.*, *Los orígenes del capitalismo en España. Banca, industria y ferrocarriles en el siglo XIX*, Madrid, 1973 (=The origins of capitalism in Spain: Banks, industry and railways in the 19th century).

*Vicens Vives, J.*, *Historia económica de España*, Barcelona, 1955 (Economic history of Spain).

*Vicens Vives, J.*, *Historia social y económica de España y América*, Vol. IV: *Burguesía, industrialización, obrerismo*, Barcelona, 1959 (=Social and economic history of Spain and Latin America, Vol. IV: The middle class, industrialisation and the workers' movement).

planning aspects have been dealt with mainly by architects and jurists, and the urban infrastructure aspects by engineers and economists.

The process has followed a similar course in all these spheres: initially, those who pioneered such research, adopting conceptual and methodological approaches similar to those existing at any given time in other European countries, were few. German and French influences were the strongest in the 1930s and 1940s, giving way later — in the 1950s and 1960s — to the British and North American, and, in the 1970s to Italian trends.

Little by little, individual research assumed a broader basis through pupils, followers and new scholars; institutional conditions were established which, although they have not necessarily been very favourable to research, have at least permitted the formalisation and definition of the disciplines involved. In this sense, the universities have played and are playing the most important role, for such research was pioneered by university lecturers and is largely continued by university departments. But it is also necessary to point out the existence of some non-university centres at which studies related to urban history have been carried out, such as some Institutes of the “Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas” and the “Instituto de Estudios de Administración Local”, which publish their own journals. There have also been important contributions by private organisations, such as foundations and research departments of the large banks.

Owing to the great variety and heterogeneity of disciplinary approaches mentioned above, it is difficult to establish general similarities in the conceptual and methodological approaches employed by all the disciplines involved in research into modern urban history. Nevertheless, it seems that, in very general terms, a common evolution can be detected in several of those disciplines. This evolution proceeded from general approaches with an empirical basis and a rather intuitive interpretation. Later on (in the 1950s and 1960s), it passed to a stage distinguished by a functionalist interpretation, aspiring to gathering large amounts of mostly statistical information. Emphasis was placed on an exalted attempt at being scientifically objective, finding serious fault with the subjectivity of the previous stage. Afterwards, or at the same time (in the 1960s and 1970s) Marxist-oriented approaches took over. Their interest lay in demonstrating the relation between the ways of organising urban space and the political systems of economic and

social organisation (applications of the Marxist theory of the origin of the capitalist city). Finally, at present, is the phase in which a certain inflation of Marxist interpretations and language is giving way to an epistemological and methodological plurality. In this situation, there seems to be an increasing interest in studying the physiognomy, morphology, genesis and configuration of fragments of urban space. At the same time, there is an attempt to dispense with broad general explanations, which interrelate all the spatial and social aspects and place excessive faith in the explanatory value of statistics.

Within this complex panorama, the fields more extensively researched from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s have been those concerning demography, social and functional structure and spatial evolution. The country's urban system as a whole, and features of regional or subregional systems, are also receiving attention. The fields of urban typology, planning, land prices, infrastructures, cultural facilities and legislation have also been studied, but to a lesser degree. Still less attention has been paid to municipal politics and finance.

In general terms, it can be said that there are a few works only offering successful syntheses of urban history. They range from monographs on specific cases (local research) to the broad interpretative views of the general historical process the nation has undergone. As already mentioned, these general histories do not directly refer to urban phenomena, which, however, appear reflected in relation to the economic, demographic, sociological, etc., perspectives on which these views are based.

## **B. The Development of Individual Fields of Research**

In the years before the outbreak of the Civil War (1936–1939) the first studies of urban history were carried out in Spain. Architects began to show more interest in understanding the evolution of the city over a period of time and in the chronological series of its plans, in order to undertake planning, which had become imperative because of the legislation of 1924 (Municipal Statute). Very simple studies of development (a succession of commented historical plans) or historic-descriptive reports were seen as a part of the basic information for town planning and were included in the programme of the School of Architecture in Madrid (100). These years also saw

the publication of the perceptive analyses of the first Spanish urban historian, the architecture teacher Torres Balbás. His work, primarily concerned with the presence of the Arabic element in Spanish cities, does not refer to the modern city, which appears after industrialisation, but his name must be mentioned as that of a pioneer and a teacher who exerted a deep and lasting influence.

The definition and measurement of the urban, as a category opposed to the rural, as well as the measurement of the level of urbanisation in Spain, its variation through time, and the identification of types of cities, are all subjects which started to be researched in the years after the Civil War by geographers, economists and sociologists on the basis of the population censuses. There was an interesting precursor in a publication by the State Office of Social Action and Emigration (85), which offered a first approach to the demographic history of the country. Some of the first works were merely descriptive (34). Later on purely statistical criteria were used (80/81/84/86/89/90). Finally introduced were economic criteria of functional specialisation and of domination, following to a certain extent North American models such as those of J. Diez Nicolás (31/32/72/73), R. M. Majoral (82), H. C. Capel (69/70), M. Ferrer and A. Precedo (77) and J. Martín and A. de Miguel (83). A good summary, updated to 1980, can be found in J. Bosque Maurel's work (26).

The study of the national system of cities, urban hierarchy, as well as territorial distribution of population and activities, has essentially been developed by geographers and economists. A pioneer in these studies is the economist R. Perpiná, who started his research during the 1930s. Influenced at the very beginning by the German ideas of the same period about economic structure, he later paid a good deal of attention to Spain's modern economic history, and to the role cities have played in it (36/37/88). Later, other scholars such as H. C. Capel (28/29) and I. M. Ivaristi (35) also devoted their attention to this subject, which, moreover, received special attention from several official institutions during the preparation of the Third Economic and Social Development Plan (1971). The Plan had a good monograph on the current state of towns and regions in Spain with reference to their historical development (39). Some research had been conducted as preparation for the Plan and the findings were published (41). Both the monograph and this research provide new information about functional hierarchy in the system of cities and about the typology and delimitation of rural, urban and metro-

politan areas. In general terms it can be said that this is a fairly well-covered field, inseparably linked to that of population and social structure. A good synthesis can be found in M. Ferrer Regales' work (33), in which he presents a typology of Spanish cities according to their demographic size, a definition of the general structure of the Spanish urban system, and an extensive analysis of the spatial organisation of industry. On the other hand, the planning experience of economic development, which has now become history, has also received attention (104/109/115).

Both the historical evolution of the Spanish population and the process of demographic concentration in cities, are realities, an understanding of which is indispensable in order to establish the definitions and characterisations that have been referred to. Most of the research mentioned above is based on demographic studies which supply knowledge about the history of urban population growth and variations in the social and economic structures of Spanish cities. But there are, in addition, other studies which concentrate more on purely demographic aspects, such as A. Garcia Barbancho's research on migration in Spain (78/79), and the interesting general historic view offered by J. Nadal (86/87). In the same sphere mention may be made of the Spanish Association of Historic Demography which was founded in 1983.

But, apart from this general research, there is another kind of more specific investigation, which forms another very important group of contribution to the historical study of the demographic and social aspects of Spanish urban reality. It is the monographs on cities (local research), mainly the work of geographers. There are already many such studies, dealing with the formative process of a city (or parts of it), paying attention to the relationship between spatial development and urban morphology on the one hand, and, on the other, demographic evolution and economic, social and functional structure. Very often a historical analysis of the power structures and their influence upon the spatial configuration, is included. Frequently, geographers try to ascertain who was in control of the city, what the motors of its economy were, and what the society living in it was like. In some cases, they endeavour to show how economic and social events are reflected in spatial organisation. They seek a correspondence between spatial structure and urban morphology as a reflection of the struggles among social groups in that space. This is because such research has often been carried out from more or less explicitly Marxist standpoints, but not

all such studies illustrate this approach. The pioneering investigations of M. de Terán could rather be included in a school related to what is nowadays called "human geography" (163/172). More recent research has emphasised the formal aspects.

The proliferation of this kind of specialised research into cities makes it necessary to select a few to give a representative overview. Attention is thus drawn to studies on Bilbao (160), Burgos (161), Cáceres (162), Cuenca (164), Gijón (165/166), Guadalajara (167), Murcia (174), Oviedo (175), Santa Cruz de Tenerife (178), Sogovia (179), Valladolid (182/183), Vigo (184) and Zaragoza (185).

As already stated, not only do all these works include a historical analysis of the demographic, economic and social aspects; one of their most important distinguishing features is the study of the historical evolution of spatial development. They analyse the historical evolution of urban growth and the various stages of the city's morphological transformations and reorganisations, especially its transition from pre-industrial to modern conditions and, in detail, the last phases of the urban explosion resulting from the economic development of the 1960s.

Moreover, this analysis often contributes to the study of the forms of land division, the distribution of property and the evolution of its economic value. It investigates and reveals the variety of land uses, carrying out a functional analysis of economic activities. The historical evolution of hydraulic and road infrastructures has often been treated, and a relatively detailed account of the various planning stages of the city is often given. In some cases, the study also includes an outline of the historical development of housing and its salient features, and reference is usually made to the architectural characteristics common to the city, its landscape and visual appearance. A concrete study of relevant urban features such as streets, squares and public spaces can be found as well. Interest in studying some of these elements, or all of them in a city, as well as the urban transformations caused by their alteration, is the characteristic feature of some monographs, including those by M. de Terán (119), R. Mas (140), L. Moya (144), D. Brandis and R. Mas (170), E. Ruiz Palomeque (171) and M. de Terán (172). Greater emphasis on the morphological and spatial aspects and less attention to the demographic, economic and social aspects serve to distinguish some of the recent investigations, carried out mainly by architects. These can be added to the above list: Barcelona (157/158), La Coruña (168/169), San Sebastián (177) and Valladolid (181). Architects are

now showing a remarkable interest in questions of urban history, together with restoration, reconstruction and the redesigning of the old parts of cities.

But, apart from the important contribution of data thus furnished by researching into specific cases, we can also find some syntheses which seek to offer complete views of the urban evolution in Spain. Thus, for instance, Capel (130) gives a general picture of the most characteristic stages in the historical formation of Spanish urban reality, which are manifested in the various fragments that make up the collage of our present-day cities. M. de Solá-Morales (150), I. de Solá-Morales (149) and R. Moneo (143) also offer overall views of some key periods in the formation process of Spanish cities, an effort whose most important forerunner is P. Bidagor (94).

On the history of urban planning, there is comprehensive and detailed general research collected in a book of considerable scope by F. de Terán (119). Some other works that are more schematic or more monographic in their approach to the subject, or cover a shorter period of time, are those by E. de Alarcón (91), P. Bidagor (95), G. Blein (96), O. Bohigas (97), G. R. Collins *et al.* (99), A. Herrero (137), E. Larrodera (103), J. Martínez Sarandese (105), V. Martorell *et al.* (106), M. Ribas Piera (108), C. Sambricio (147), R. Urena (121), M. Valenzuela (122), a work from the city-administration of Madrid (92) and several publications by F. de Terán (114/115/116/118/120/151).

The history of infrastructures is, as stated earlier, a subject frequently discussed in local research monographs, and there are very few general studies of it, except those that deal with intercity infrastructures, such as the road network (138/141), the railway network (125/132/155), and the telecommunications network (129/142/146). As a valuable forerunner, there is a general history of public works in Spain until the end of the 19th century by P. Alzola (124). On the other hand, there are several local studies of some infrastructural systems in certain cities. For instance, there are good historical studies of the creation of Madrid's water supply (145), its approaches (136) and railway stations (123). Added to that engineers have, in recent years, started taking an interest in historical research on these topics, and the history of public works having been introduced as a subject in some schools of civil engineering.

Investigations into the organisation and the legal system of cities have been carried out in Spain within the framework of various academic disciplines integrated in the faculties of law. Even though



legal historians have paid some general attention to the evolution of local legislation, it has mainly been the discipline of administrative law that has dealt with the study of urban legal history, sometimes through monographs, at other times within the framework of the general study of institutions. In recent decades, administrative law has given rise to the appearance of two disciplines that are steadily establishing a clear profile: municipal law and urban law.

The development of legal history has essentially followed an institutionalist course, influenced by German ideas of the past century, neglecting until recently more modern historical periods. As an antecedent, L. García Valdeavellano's work can be cited. This is the most solid research into the origins and the organisation of Spanish cities, even though it refers only to the medieval period.

On the other hand, administrative law was initially oriented towards interpretation of the legal stipulations in their historical development in the matter of local system and city planning. Later on it attempted to integrate legal aspects with the economic and social context, trying to offer an overall history. The first efforts in this direction are found in two excellent works by A. Posada (63/64).

The urban explosion that Spain experienced from 1950 onwards brought about an increasing interest in the history of urban law. In 1950, the "Instituto de Estudios de Administración Local" published a compilation of historical texts, as well as description of the course of development of Spanish urban legislation (54). M. Bassols' fundamental work (47) presents exhaustive research into the historical development of urban legislation, connected with socio-economic conditions, and with the ideas and the theoretical conception of town planning. P. Arnanz's (44) and L. Parejo's (62) works follow the same line.

The historical study of administrative organisation is more copious and difficult to synthesise. Mention may be made of the work of I. Beneyto (48), R. Larrainzar (56) and M. Baena (46). The relationship between state administration and local organisation has been researched by L. Morell Ocaña (60), and the subject of municipal finance by R. Rodríguez Monino (65), G. Coloma Martí (49) and I. Moral Ruiz (59). There are also important and exhaustive bibliographies (50/53/61).

The current panorama of investigation in urban history from the legal viewpoint shows a new methodology distinguished by an attempt to incorporate the complementary approaches of political science and philosophy, as well as of economics and sociology. This

enrichment may lead to a deepening of urban history through local research which has not been brought about from the legal viewpoint. A historical view of urban law has become an important subject in Spanish law faculties.

Forms of municipal government and the political life of institutions, in relation to the operation of the political parties, have received attention in recent works of general history and monographs on specific subjects, periods or situations (45/51/57/58/66/67).

Other subjects to which attention should be paid — if urban history is accepted as a composite field of study — and which have been sorely neglected to date, or been given unequal attention in local research into individual cities. Such subjects include industry and trade in the city, public services, municipal enterprises, urban transport planning, cultural facilities, the press, parochial planning of the Catholic Church, etc. These topics still lack comprehensive and comparative research.

### **C. Conclusions**

All this points to the conclusion (as anticipated at the beginning) that urban history in Spain does not exist as an autonomous discipline and that historical studies related to town planning and the city are a heterogeneous mass which has been accumulated from different and unintegrated disciplinary spheres. It is significant that there is no complete, systematic and comprehensive work presenting the history of Spanish cities, nor is there a journal specifically devoted to this subject, nor have any bibliographies dealing exclusively with urban history been compiled.

Individual fields of modern urban history have been researched. Some are well covered and others have been virtually neglected.

Among the well-covered areas are the overall system of cities and their distribution, urban population, migration and urban growth. The subjects of planning, spatial evolution of cities and social and functional structure are also well covered, but a general study of the types of cities and the forms of their evolution and development is lacking. There is a good deal of local research but it is not systematised in a synthesis. The field of cultural activities and services has not been researched either. There are analyses of the current situation and forecasts on future shortcomings, but no studies on the historical development leading to these problems. Historical re-

search into the evolution of urban infrastructures is also lacking. The relationship between urban history and political movements and the role of the parties or the church have not been studied, and are topics of awaiting future researchers.

The last few years have witnessed greater interest in the historical aspects of the city and city planning. This could well mean that the time may be ripe for a combined effort to integrate the scattered and individual research projects. The forerunner of this was the Symposium on City Planning and Urban History organised in 1980 by the art historian A. Bonet. It seems that the time has arrived to organise the establishment of a true discipline of urban history in Spain, in so far as this goal may be attainable. We are aware that the difficulties are great, as has been observed in the course followed by other countries since the Leicester Congress in 1966.